

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 05678

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS EG CY
SUBJECT: PRIMIN ON LARNACA INCIDENT

REF: CAIRO 5537

1. I TALKED LAST NIGHT WITH PRIMIN MAMDUH SALEM ABOUT LARNACA INCIDENT. HE WAS BITTER ABOUT CYPRIOT GOVT'S REACTION. HE INSISTED THAT ADEQUATE ADVANCE WARNING HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES THAT A COMMANDO FORCE WOULD BE ABOARD THE EGYPTIAN C-130. IN THE ABSENCE OF KYPRIANOU, HE HAD PERSONALLY TELEPHONED SOMEONE NAMED STAVROS TO INFORM HIM THAT GOE WAS SENDING A TEAM TO ASSIST IN APPREHENDING THE TWO TERRORISTS. ASKED IF HE HAD SPECIFIED THAT THE TEAM CONSISTED OF COMMANDOS, SALEM ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD NOT DONE SO. HE HAD CALLED ON AN OPEN LINE AND HIS COMMENTS TO STAVROS HAD BEEN IN "CODE." HE WAS SURE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT STAVROS UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS INTENDED.

2. EGYPTIAN ACTION IN SENDING COMMANDOS, SALEM STATED EMPHATICALLY, HAD BEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE AND NECESSARY TO STOP INTERNATIONAL
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TERRORISM. THIS IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED RESPONSIBILITY AND SALEM SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES TO DO THEIR PART. KYPRIANOU AND LYSSARIDES HAD APPARENTLY BEEN WILLING TO STRIKE A BARGAIN WITH THE TERRORISTS AND ALLOW THE TWO PALESTINIANS TO GET OFF SCOT-FREE. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT AND ACTING FONMIN GHALI

HAD, ON INSTRUCTIONS, MADE THIS POINT CRYSTAL CLEAR TO THE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES. SALEM PROFESSED TO BE CONVINCED THAT HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE EGYPTIAN ACTION, THE CYPRIOTS WOULD NOT HAVE JAILED AND ARRAIGNED THE TWO TERRORISTS. EGYPT IS DEMANDING THEIR EXTRADITION SO THEY CAN BE TRIED HERE FOR THE MURDER OF YUSEF SIBAL. THE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES ARE CLAIMING THE CASE IS SUB-JUDICE, HENCE EXTRADITION IS NOT POSSIBLE. GOE HAD ALSO MADE CLEAR TO THE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES THAT FUTURE EGYPTIAN/CYPRIOT RELATIONS DEPEND UPON A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, ON ORDERS OF SADAT, THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO CYPRUS AND THE EGYPTIAN TRADE MISSION IN THAT COUNTRY HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN. THE CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO IS ALSO RETURNING HOME. ASKED IF THIS WAS INTENDED TO MEAN THAT RELATIONS HAVE BEEN SEVERED, AS SOME EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE SUGGESTED, SALEM SAID NO. WHETHER OR NOT RELATIONS ARE ULTIMATELY SEVERED WILL DEPEND ON THE CYPRIOT RESPONSE.

4. SOMEWHAT RUEFULLY, SALEM RECALLED THAT GOE HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE GOVT OF CYPRUS IN ITS DIFFICULTIES WITH THE TURKS. THIS LATEST CYPRIOT ACTION WAS HARDLY CONSISTENT WITH THE STATE OF GOOD RELATIONS WHICH HAS SO LONG EXISTED BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. GOE WILL HAVE TO REVIEW ITS POLICY
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TOWARD CYPRUS. WHILE SALEM DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY SO, IMPLICATION WAS THAT GOE MIGHT BE DISPOSED TO SHIFT ITS SUPPORT FROM CYPRIOTS TO TURKS.

5. COMMENT: SALEM GAVE NO SUGGESTION THAT GOE MAY HAVE HANDLED THE DISPATCH OF COMMANDOS TO LARNACA CLUMSILY. HIS WHOLE THESIS WAS THAT CYPRUS, NO LESS THAN EGYPT, HAS A DUTY TO SUPPRESS INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THAT CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES HAD SHAMEFULLY EVADED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND STABBED EGYPT IN THE BACK. EILTS

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